

1. (Amended) An isolated polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of:

- a¹
- a) an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, and SEQ ID NO:5,
 - b) a naturally-occurring amino acid sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:3 and SEQ ID NO:5,
 - c) a biologically-active fragment of an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, and SEQ ID NO:5,
 - d) an immunogenic fragment of an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, and SEQ ID NO:5, and
 - e) a naturally-occurring amino acid sequence having at least 98% sequence identity to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

2. (Amended) An isolated polypeptide of claim 1, comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, and SEQ ID NO:5.

3. (Reiterated) An isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide of claim 1.

4. (Reiterated) An isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide of claim 2.

5. (Reiterated) An isolated polynucleotide of claim 4, having a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:4, and SEQ ID NO:6.

6. (Reiterated) A recombinant polynucleotide comprising a promoter sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide of claim 3.

7. (Reiterated) A cell transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide of claim 6.

8. (Reiterated) A method for producing a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) culturing a cell under conditions suitable for expression of the polypeptide, wherein said cell is transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide, and said recombinant polynucleotide comprises a promoter sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide encoding the polypeptide of claim 1, and
- b) recovering the polypeptide so expressed.

9. (Reiterated) A method of claim 8, wherein the polypeptide has a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, and SEQ ID NO:5.

10. (Reiterated) An isolated antibody which specifically binds to a polypeptide of claim 1.

11. (Reiterated) An isolated polynucleotide comprising a sequence selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:4, and SEQ ID NO:6,
- b) a naturally-occurring polynucleotide sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to a polynucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:4, and SEQ ID NO:6,
- c) a polynucleotide sequence complementary to a),
- d) a polynucleotide sequence complementary to b) and
- e) a ribonucleotide equivalent of a)-d).

12. (Reiterated) An isolated polynucleotide comprising at least 60 contiguous nucleic acids of claim 11.

13. (Reiterated) A method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 11, the method comprising:

- a) hybridizing the sample with a probe comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides comprising a sequence complementary to said target polynucleotide in the sample, and which probe specifically hybridizes to said target polynucleotide, under conditions whereby a hybridization complex is formed between said probe and said target polynucleotide or fragments thereof, and
- b) detecting the presence or absence of said hybridization complex, and, optionally, if present, the amount thereof.

14. (Reiterated) A method of claim 13, wherein the probe comprises at least 60 contiguous nucleotides.

15. (Reiterated) A method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 11, the method comprising:

- a) amplifying said target polynucleotide or fragment thereof using polymerase chain reaction amplification, and
- b) detecting the presence or absence of said amplified target polynucleotide or fragment thereof, and, optionally, if present, the amount thereof.

16. (Amended) A composition comprising an a polypeptide of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

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17. (Amended) A composition of claim 16, wherein the polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:3, and SEQ ID NO:5.

18. (Reiterated) A method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an agonist of a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 to a compound, and
- b) detecting agonist activity in the sample.

19. (Reiterated) A method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an antagonist of a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 to a compound, and
- b) detecting antagonist activity in the sample.

20. (Reiterated) A method for screening a compound for effectiveness in altering expression of a target polynucleotide, wherein said target polynucleotide comprises a sequence of claim 4, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising the target polynucleotide to a compound, and
- b) detecting altered expression of the target polynucleotide.

21. (New) An isolated polypeptide of claim 1, comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

22. (New) A composition of claim 16, wherein the polypeptide comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.
